Chapter 18 Notes

Conquest and Survival: The Trans-Mississippi West

Evaluate how later emigrants forced changes in the lifestyles of two of the following groups in the West.

1. Native Americans
2. Mexican Americans
3. Mormons
4. Cowboys

**Native Americans: Oklahoma Land Rush p. 606-607 and map 608 (Document A)**

**What were the promises to the Five Civilized Tribes?**

* 1830s federal government designated Oklahoma as Indian Territory, reserved for Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. They settled the area and were relatively prosperous as cotton farmers, hog and cattle growers, millers, and cotton ginners.
* The Civil War killed about 1/5 of their population in this Indian Territory. (population decline, tribes weakened by population loss)

**What happened to the promises?**

* New treaties were produced to make room for more displaced tribes from other areas, so they had to give up about half of what had been promised in the 1830s. Many of these tribes were forced onto reservations in Western Oklahoma. The Indians were crowded and unable to sustain their communities. (See map p. 608 1 inch = 100 miles, tens of thousands of Indians to live as farmers and hunters.)
* The Indian lands were broken up and granted to individuals in 160 acre plots instead of being owned collectively by the tribe, which went against the traditional Indian ways. What went unclaimed by individual Indians was given to white settlers.

**What were some later promises?**

* Medicine Lodge Treaty 1867 – brought Comanches, Apaches, Kiowas, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes, Sioux, Shoshones, and Bannocks were assigned to reservations in the Indian Territory promised to the Five Civilized Nations.
* Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868 gave the Black Hills to the Sioux in perpetuity.
* The Curtis Act 1898 formally ended Indian communal land ownership (dissolving Indian Territory). Indian self-government dismantled. TREATIES ABANDONED BY U.S.

**What happened to those later promises?**

* Tribal lands were granted to individuals in 160 acre parcels, destroying traditional Indian practice of communal living.
* Then the area known as “No Man’s land” was opened to non-Indian settlement and the railroads entered the area.
* Gold was discovered in the Black Hills and white prospectors overran the territory.
* Although the Indians tried to defend their rights, they were defeated by the U.S. military.

**Document B: Map p. 614**

**What was happening in the trans-Mississippi West between 1860 and 1900?**

* Gold and silver were being mined, mostly by big well-capitalized mining companies throughout the west.
* Railroads were being constructed to link the east and west, making it easier to move people and goods across the continent. As the railroads were built, settlements were established and land was sold and developed along the railways.
* Texas longhorns emerged as a supply of meat for the cities of the north and northeast. Cattle drives led by cowboys moved the cattle from Texas northward to the rail lines and meat-processing/packing cities of Dodge City, Kansas; Abilene, Kansas; Kansas City, Missouri; and Chicago, Illinois.

**What successive changes occurred?**

* People went west to prospect for gold and silver. Boom towns popped up and were abandoned. A few managed to survive. Most miners didn’t profit much because it took heavy equipment and great capital to extract the metals from deep in the earth.
* People moved west along the rails because it was much easier than going by wagon train. People who went bust could also move back east. As the railroads sold the land, people went to establish themselves on family farms, but faced harsh soil and weather conditions. Homestead Act of 1862 granted 160 acres to people who would live on the land for 5 years and improve the land. About half gave up and were unable to maintain their claims.
* Cowboy culture developed for about 20 years until the cattle drives ended because of over production. Cattle grazing led to the decline in buffalo populations
* Much of the west was left in a relatively lawless state because mostly men populated the west and they were unrestrained by social norms and laws. Gambling, cattle rustling, horse thieving, and prostitution were rampant. (Roy Rogers DVD?)

**How did this affect the four groups mentioned above?**

1. Native Americans – faced invasion of their lands, intentional destruction of the buffalo by the U.S. military to force the Indians to surrender occurred, natural environment destroy and overtaken by invasive species, way of life utterly destroyed
2. Mexican Americans- lived largely in the border zone between the U.S. and Mexico. They had their own culture and way of life. Legally, the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo granted citizenship to Hispanics, but local whites often fraudulently took control of the land. City Hispanics merged well into the new commercial economy, but rural Hispanics struggled between their old way of life subsistence farming and herding. They were pretty much forced into working as seasonal farm labor or as laborers.
3. Mormons- The Mormons had migrated into the Great Salt Lake Basin, but as non-Mormons moved west, they were opposed to the Mormon practice of polygamy. The Mormon Church also forbade the selling of land in conflict with federal law. Essentially the Mormons lost the freedom to practice their religion, although the 1879 case of United States v. Reynolds ruled they had the freedom to believe as they wished (but not practice). The Edmunds Act passed by Congress denied the right to vote to people who practiced polygamy. The Edmunds-Tucker Act seized all Mormon Church property valued over $50,000 and had federal officials in charge of elections. By 1890s the Mormons had agreed to renounce polygamy.
4. Cowboys – For 20 years the cowboys had their boom years. They lived a somewhat solitary life moving cattle for hundreds of miles. Their work was seasonal and dangerous. It was so bad that cowboys complained that no company would sell them life insurance. Legends grew about cowboys and life on the range, many of which were fostered by the cowboys themselves. As public appetite increased for such stories, novels and live shows were produced to satisfy that need. A myth of the cowboy’s romantic lifestyle emerged. Cowboys eventually would perform in the shows, showing off their roping, riding, and shooting skills.

**Document C: Map page 617 Mormon Sphere of Influence**

**Why did the Mormon community settle in the Far West?** They had been persecuted in New York and moved to St. Louis, MO to escape persecution. In St. Louis they faced more persecution, where their founder Joseph Smith was murdered. The community sought refuge in the sparsely populated west in mostly Utah but in an area stretching from Idaho to Mexico.

**What was happening to the Mormon community by 1883?**

By 1883, government rule of the territories had tightened.

* Newspapers attacked the Mormons for practicing polygamy.
* The government sued them in court, and the Supreme Court declared in United States v. Reynolds in 1879 that they could believe as they wished, but could not practice polygamy.
* Congress passed the Edmunds Act in 1882 which denied a person who practiced polygamy the right to vote. They could also be fined and/or imprisoned.
* The government also seized land and property from the Mormon Church (Edmunds-Tucker Act 1887) because the church taught that land was not to be sold, but rather held communally.

**What additional changes occurred by 1896?**

* The Mormons were left little choice but to renounce polygamy in 1890s.
* Because they had been forced to, they had given up their common ownership of land. They began to resemble the same communities they had sought to escape.

**Document D: Painting of market plaza in San Antonio (1878-1879) p. 618**

**What was happening to Mexican Americans in Texas at this time?**

* Much Mexican territory was lost to the U.S. Hispanics had the opportunity to choose whether to immigrate to Mexico or remain in U.S. territory. Technically the Hispanics gained full rights of U.S. citizens; however, they often faced discrimination and loss of lands due to fraud or coercion. For example, 80% of land belonging to Mexicanos was taken by the Santa Fe Ring (lawyers, politicians, and land speculators).
* Mexicanos in the towns tended to flourish and adapt to the market economy, but poor subsistence farmers and shepherds from rural areas did not adapt as readily. They were forced off their farms by new settlement and became seasonal farm workers. Some took jobs and their families moved to cities.
* Some Hispanics felt frustrated at their lack of progress and attacked white owned stores and engaged in vigilante justice against white criminals who had not been punished. Several rebellions occurred such as “Cortina’s War,” Las Gorras Blancas. The Hispanic-American Alliance used political action to fight for their rights.
* Hispanics maintained their cultural heritage, including language, religion of the Roman Catholic Church and holidays.

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<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fse08>

**Who was this Texas patriot, veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto?**

He was a native son of a prominent family of the San Antonio area. He was a local official who joined the Texians in their war for independence from Mexico and Santa Anna. He helped take San Antonio from the Mexicans and entered the Alamo when a bigger Mexican army besieged the compound. He was sent for reinforcements and therefore escaped the same fate as Travis, Crockett, and Bowie. He fought with General Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto where Santa Anna’s army was defeated. He returned to take over San Antonio and bury the Alamo defenders. He served in the Senate of the Republic of Texas.

He went to Mexico to help the federalists fight against the centralists who wanted all the power.

Meanwhile many more people from the U.S. had moved into Texas in his absence. They were ignorant of the part Tejanos played in the fight for Texas independence from Mexico. They were suspicious of him and other Tejanos and treated them very poorly. One such example is Felix Huston who came to Texas after the war was over. He was appointed Sect. of War for the Republic of Texas and was afraid that San Antonio could not be defended from new invasions by Santa Anna. He ordered the historic city including its missions burned to the ground (1841). Juan Seguin, mayor of San Antonio, intervened to block the destruction of San Antonio. As a result his loyalty to the Republic was questioned. In 1842, San Antonio was overrun twice by Santa Anna’s forces. Seguin and others retreated to Seguin, Texas and planned a counter attack; however, Seguin was blamed for the attacks on San Antonio.

**Why was he treated in such a manner?**

Basically because the Anglos who were immigrating to Texas from the United States were ignorant of the history of Tejanos and their involvement in the Texas Revolution.

**What does that say about the treatment of all Mexican American on the frontier of the United States, 1860-1900?**

If the whites treated their Hispanic heroes with such disrespect, how much worse even it must have been for the ordinary Hispanics.

**Document E Woodcut “Curly Wolves Howled on Saturday Night” p. 621**

**What kind of image of the cowboy did this graphic create?**

It creates an image of a carefree party-boy, who is a bit of a rabble-rouser.

**Was that image accurate?**

In a way it was accurate. When cowboys would complete their journey, they would receive their pay for the entire drive in one day. Often they would spend the money in the nearest saloon on drinking, women, and gambling. However, largely the image is not accurate. Most days cowboys spent lonely on the range riding alongside the cattle and keeping them moving, helping them to ford streams, navigate canyons, and avoid snakes. At night cowboys would take turns keeping watch for rustlers and predator animals. The life style was really very solitary.

**How did the cowboy live his daily life?** As mentioned above.

**How did the railroads, barbed wire, the arrival of farmers, and the end of the open range change the lifestyle of the cowboy?**

Railroads in some ways helped develop the cowboy life because they cowboys drove the cattle to markets on the rail lines. However, as the railroads expanded, there was less need for drives as the railroads came to the cattle. Barbed wire and enclosed pastures prevented cowboys from driving their herds. Sometimes the cowboys conflicted with landowners and their cattle trampled the planted fields of farmers. Sheepherders also competed with cowboys for grazing land. Sheep grazed land was clipped too short and was unfit for cattle. The real end of the cattle industry and the cowboy lifestyle came by the overstocking of herds, which were too many to be sustained on the remaining grasses. Also bad weather in 1885-1887 (drought and blizzard) helped kill off 90% in the cattle in the northern Plains. Investments in the cattle industry declined and many cattlemen went bankrupt.

**Document F Sod home photo p. 642.**

**When farm homes like this began to appear on the western frontier along with barbed wire, corn fields, domesticated farm animals, families, and towns, what would be the impact upon the four groups mentioned in the question**? (Native Americans, Mexicans, Mormons, Cowboys)

Native Americans were forced off their land to make room for these homesteads of 160 acres each. Their hunting and planting grounds were destroyed and they were unable to sustain their communities. Most were forced on to reservations. Their way of life was destroyed as the buffalo were killed off and their hunting grounds were fenced in and plowed and planted.

Mexicans and Mormons may not have been as affected because they lived in the southwest and the west, not the plains where the sod houses were built.

Cowboys were very affected because they could not drive their cattle across this land that was fenced and/or planted. They would have to go around or confront or pay the landowners.

**How would their lives change?**